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ALBERTA HANSARD

ANNUAL REPORT
1983

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ALBERTA

OFFICE OF
Alberta Hansard

Room 412
Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta
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March 19, 1984.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

I have the honour to submit the annual report of Alberta Hansard for the calendar year ended December 31, 1983.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Bubba

Robert Bubba

Editor, Alberta Hansard.

Alberta Hansard

ANNUAL REPORT

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Prepared for the Honourable Gerard Amerongen
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Assembly of Alberta

March 19, 1984

Alberta Hansard
Room 412 Legislature Building
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

PUBLICATION OF ALBERTA HANSARD

Under the authority of Mr. Speaker and in accordance with Standing Orders 97 and 98, seventy-eight issues of Alberta Hansard were published in 1983, reporting the proceedings of the First Session of the 20th Legislature held during that year. Total number of pages published in 1983 was 1,936.

BOUND VOLUMES

Bound volumes for the Fourth Session of the 19th Legislature were distributed early in 1983. Each set consisted of two books, one containing 936 pages of text and the other containing the index. As in 1982, there was an increase in the number of subscriptions to bound volumes for the First Session of the 20th Legislature. Accordingly, the number of bound volume sets for that session has been increased from 135 the previous year to 185.

CIRCULATION AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Printing volume during 1983 was 1,450 copies of each issue, divided as follows: 600 copies for distribution in the Legislature Building and over the counter sales, 650 copies for subscriptions, and 200 copies for binding. As in the past, adjustments were made to these numbers from time to time, to accommodate changes in the number of subscribers. The Hansard branch continued to maintain the subscription mailing list from data provided by the Office of the Clerk, and to produce mailing covers for subscription copies.

ARCHIVES

Eighty master tapes covering the spring sittings of the Legislature (March 10, 1983, to June 6, 1983) and the hearings of the Public Affairs Committee on Bill 110 (April 25 to April 28), were deposited with the Provincial Archives on June 17, 1983. They have been assigned accession number 83.195 and are traceable in the Provincial Archives by this

number. Master tapes of the 1983 fall sittings will be sent to the Provincial Archives early in 1984.

COMMITTEE REPORTING

Installation of a new text-processing system in August 1983 greatly enhanced the production efficiency and readability of committee transcripts. Prior to that date, printing was done on a laser printer at the Terrace Computing Centre. With the introduction of in-house text-processing equipment, transcripts for the latter part of the year were printed on a proportional spacing printer in the Hansard branch.

All transcripts were delivered, usually within 48 hours of the meeting, to the office of the Clerk of Committees for distribution. Annually, transcripts for each committee are collated, bound, and filed with the Legislature Library, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Clerk of Committees, and the committee chairman. The 1983 bound volumes, with detailed table of contents, were delivered February 10, 1984.

The number of meetings for which transcripts were produced in 1983 was up dramatically from any previous year: 268 percent over 1982, an election year, and 84 per cent over 1981. Nevertheless, the existing staff were able to handle the extra load, partly through a redistribution of duties among permanent staff and more hours of work for part-time staff. The streamlining of production methods outlined above ensured that delivery deadlines were met.

The following table summarizes committee transcription work completed in 1983.

Name of Committee	Number of Meetings	Duration (Hours)
Standing Committee on the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act	23	32.24
Standing Committee on Legislative Offices	11	19.20
Special Select Standing Committee on Members' Services	14	26.15
Standing Committee on Private Bills	5	5.30
Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing	6	10.80
Standing Committee on Public Accounts	12	15.25
Standing Committee on Public Affairs	4	12.55
Special Committee to Search for and Select an Ombudsman	2	2.62
Select Special Committee on Senate Reform	1	1.58
Select Committee on the Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act	13	55.68
Other	1	.88
TOTAL	92	182.25
Comparable 1982	25	53.20
Comparable 1981	50	71.00

HANSARD INDEX

Indexing of Alberta Hansard remained unchanged during 1983. Cumulations of the index were provided during session to the Legislature Library for the use of members and others. Final cumulations were provided during between-session periods, and a complete index will be published after prorogation of the First Session.

The annual bound index for 1983 will be produced using a photocomposition process. Planning for photocomposition was initiated during 1981, and completed and tested by the summer of 1983. The system being employed is the PENTA System and APS-5 Phototypesetter in use at the Queen's Printer. It is estimated that by using this method, the size of the index will be reduced by half, while providing a more readable text.

Reference services of the Hansard Librarian remained available to those seeking index information. A record of these inquiries has been kept since July 27, 1983, and a total of 57 questions have been answered, 37 from Assembly staff and 20 from other departmental staff and the public.

Other services provided by the Hansard Librarian during 1983 included preparation of a new index to the revised Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, at the request of Parliamentary Counsel. A table showing the progress of the passage of Bills was published with most Monday issues of Alberta Hansard and in the final issue for 1983, dated November 30.

STAFF

The appointment of a new Editor in November 1982, the implementation of a new text-processing system, and normal staff turnover, resulted in a number of staffing changes and the revision of several position descriptions within the branch during 1983.

Effective February 1, 1983, Donna Bennett was promoted to the position of Associate Editor and Vivian Loosemore to that of Senior Editor, both appointments

resulting from the promotion in November 1982 of the then Associate Editor to the position of Editor. As well, effective the same date, Susan Martin was appointed branch Secretary, after competition. Miss Martin had filled the position temporarily since December 6, 1982, following the transfer of the previous incumbent to the government members' office.

Effective June 1, 1983, Sheila Unger, who had occupied the position of Production Supervisor in an acting capacity since February 7, 1983, was permanently appointed to that position after open competition.

The position of Assistant Production Supervisor was unfilled during 1983, as the incumbent, who had been on maternity leave, decided not to return at the end of her leave. It was decided not to refill the position until after the fall sittings, in order to determine what, if any, changes should be made to the definition of it in consequence of the installation of new text-processing equipment in the branch over the summer. Accordingly, many of the responsibilities of the position were temporarily assumed by the Staff Editor, Susan Peet.

Following the installation of new text-processing equipment in the branch in August 1983 and its use by Hansard staff during the 24-day fall sittings, a review of all branch position descriptions was undertaken, to update them to reflect changes in practices that resulted from this installation. By year-end, five position descriptions—those of the Associate Editor, Senior Editor, Staff Editor, Production Supervisor, and Assistant Production Supervisor—had been rewritten and submitted for approval by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. The remaining position descriptions—those of the Editor, Librarian, and Secretary—are to be rewritten and the vacant position on the staff filled in early 1984. It is anticipated that this appointment will alleviate to a great extent the burden of overtime hours worked by permanent staff throughout 1983.

As in the past, the permanent staff was augmented by some 14 temporary, hourly-rated staff during sessional periods. Some hourly staff were also retained as required

from time to time during non-sessional periods to assist in preparing transcripts of legislative committee proceedings or to perform other duties.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Although four members of the Hansard staff were scheduled to take various professional development seminars during 1983, it was not possible for two of them to attend due to the length of the spring sittings. However, the Editor attended a two-day program on meeting skills, on October 17 and 18, and the Staff Editor, Susan Peet, attended a four-day seminar on women entering a supervisory role, held on June 7 to 10, 1983.

CONFERENCES

The Editor accompanied the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to Syntopican XI, the annual conference of the Association of Information Systems Professionals (AISP), held in San Francisco, June 13 to 16, 1983. The conference theme was Integrated Systems: The Technologies and their Uses. A wide variety of topics were discussed under four main headings: systems technology, training and productivity, planning, and developing information systems. The conference also afforded an opportunity to exchange views and share information with other conference delegates from Canada and the United States who represented a broad range of public- and private-sector information-related activities and professions. Finally, an extensive product show exhibited equipment and services in such areas as word processing, typesetting, personal computing, telecommunications, local area networking, and data conversion. With the entry of the Hansard branch into in-house text processing and telecommunications, as well as similar developments in Legislative Assembly office, it is felt that regular attendance at conferences of this sort is and will continue to be an indispensable way of keeping pace with developments in this very fast-moving area.

The annual conference of the Hansard Association of Canada was held in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, August 16 to 19, 1983, and was attended by the Editor as well as 13 representatives from other Canadian parliaments and from Great Britain. Workshop discussions held at this conference concentrated on indexing practices, word processing, and editing. There was also a workshop on matters particularly related to the production of Hansard in bilingual jurisdictions.

Given the recent proliferation of the use of word-processing equipment in various jurisdictions, with some Hansard offices well advanced in implementation and use, others at entry level, and still others only at the feasibility study stage, the exchange of ideas on this topic was extremely timely and profitable, particularly as it dealt with the problems encountered in integrating and adapting the new technology to the traditional area of Hansard editing and publication.

PRODUCTION

Major changes in equipment and methods of production occurred in the Hansard branch in 1983. Terms of acquisition for a new text processor were finalized and site planning begun during the first quarter. Immediately following the spring sittings of the Legislative Assembly, all equipment associated with the mainframe-based text processor that had previously been used for Hansard production was removed from the branch and site preparation for the new equipment with its in-house processor begun. This consisted mainly of extensive rewiring; erection of a partition wall to create a room to house the processor, printers, and supplies; the alteration of desks to accommodate the new terminals, as well as the building of new bookcases; updating of lighting; and painting.

All site work was completed by mid-July and the branch took delivery of the new equipment, including a processor with 60 megabytes of fixed disk storage, 11 terminals, two printers, related software, and accessories, on August 8. A high-speed draft printer was added to the system in September. During the ensuing four-month period, this

equipment underwent an extensive shakedown which included transcript production for all legislative committees, staff training, and Hansard production for the fall sittings. After successful completion of this acceptance test, the system was placed on a three-year, third-party lease commencing December 1, 1983.

The implementation of in-house text processing has had immediate, tangible benefits for the branch. The main advantage has been that the time-consuming process of preparing typesetting tapes at the Terrace Computing Centre and transferring them by messenger to the printshop, a process that usually took one and one-half to two hours, was reduced to about half an hour through the use of bisynchronous telecommunications. This greatly facilitated the meeting of printer deadlines during the fall sittings.

A second major benefit has been the relative ease of use of the new system, and the capacity of the system to be rendered even more user friendly through programs and routines that do code insertion and replacement, thereby releasing the operator from the time-consuming and error-prone process of code input, and allowing the operator to concentrate on the text rather than the mechanics of system operation. As well, the ease of use of the system has resulted in a 25 percent decrease in the length of time required to train a new editor, with related cost benefits.

Third, the use of an in-house draft printer has resulted in much more efficient production of proof copy, since it is no longer necessary to make time-consuming trips to the Terrace Computing Centre, often after midnight, to pick up this material. Fourth, the in-house processor makes the branch far less subject to production delays arising from computer down time, which was the case with the previous mainframe-based system with its many users and numerous applications.

Finally, a major cost saving has been realized with the new system, compared to the equipment it replaced. To illustrate, data processing costs for Hansard production for a typical month during the spring of 1983 ranged from $15,000 to $17,000, depending on

the amount of use. During a typical non-sessional month, the cost was approximately $4,000, for an annual total of $95,000 to $100,000. The new system costs $5,400 per month or $65,000 per annum, a saving of $30,000 to $35,000 each year. Moreover, while the former system was billed on a user-pay basis, the new system has a fixed monthly cost, making it much easier to budget for, as its cost is in no way related to the amount it is used.

The implementation of this new system has provided the Hansard branch with the most advanced and sophisticated equipment currently in use in this application, and has enhanced the branch's ability to provide a useful and timely service to the Legislative Assembly.

BRANCH BUDGET

The accompanying financial statement summarizes branch expenditures between January 1 and December 31, 1983.

A major increase under Manpower was recorded in respect of wages paid to sessional staff, reflecting a substantial increase in the number of sitting days in 1983 compared to 1982 (78 versus 40), a significant increase in committee activity (see above, page 5), and the effect of April 1, 1983, wage increments.

Under Supplies and Services, an increase in Rental of Assets and Telephone and Communications covered rental of new text-processing equipment acquired during 1983, and is partially offset by a decrease in the cost of Data Processing Services for the same period.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

(January 1 - December 31, 1983)

	01/01/83 31/03/83	01/04/83 31/12/83	Total 1983	Comparable 1982
MANPOWER				
Salaries	46,089.68	146,728.82	192,818.50	183,706.22
Wages	24,465.90	126,420.89	150,886.79	26,825.40
Payments to Contract Employees	3,520.67	—	3,520.67	5,251.51
Employer Contrib.	5,641.52	18,608.04	24,249.56	15,987.20
Allow. & Suppl. Benefits	—	436.50	436.50	435.00
	79,717.77	292,194.25	371,912.02 (a)	232,205.33
SUPPLIES AND SERVICES				
Travel Expenses	87.65	3,134.70	3,222.35	2,394.60
Advertising	—	160.64	160.64	—
Freight & Postage	5,058.17	12,395.96	17,454.13	13,741.96
Rental of Assets	480.63	38,492.02	38,972.65	1,658.59
Telephone and Communications	15.20	1,865.02	1,880.22	110.77
Repair & Maintenance	120.50	257.95	378.45	82.50
Prof., Tech. and Labour Services	37,758.00	148,014.10	185,772.10	231,577.87
Data Processing Services	21,333.61	67,007.68	88,341.29	110,011.21
Hospitality	14.95	97.70	112.65	49.35
Materials & Supplies	1,979.67	3,841.70	5,821.37	4,275.98
	66,848.38	275,267.47	342,115.85 (b)	363,902.83
PURCHASE OF FIXED ASSETS	—	3,131.50	3,131.50 (c)	—
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	146,566.15	570,593.22	717,159.37 (a+b+c)	596,108.16

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editor wishes to acknowledge and thank Mr. Speaker and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly for their confidence over a period of major change in the Hansard branch; the Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees for his support during an especially active year for legislative committees; Parliamentary Counsel for his invaluable assistance and advice in concluding the legal documentation relevant to the installation of the branch's new text processor; and the Director of Administration and her staff for the continuing assistance in many areas provided by the Legislative Assembly Office.

The Editor also wishes to express his gratitude to the management and staff of the Computer Processing Division (Terrace Computing Centre and Technical Support Branch) and the Property Management Division (Central Region) of Alberta Public Works, Supply and Services for their ongoing co-operation and assistance and especially for their support in the very successful implementation of the new text-processing system.